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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 001293

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER DISCOURAGED ON ZIMBABWE

REF: ABUJA 1047

Classified By: Joseph G. Sullivan for reasons 1.5b/d

1.(C) Nigerian High Commissioner Wilberforce Juta portrayed the stalemate in Zimbabwe along lines similar to those of reftel. Juta believed that President Mugabe had backed away from agreements reached during the May visit of the Presidents of Nigeria, South Africa and Malawi. He expressed frustration that the efforts of his President were not being reciprocated by the GOZ. He considered the GOZ economic policies disastrous irredeemable without a political solution. Juta believed that internal ZANU-PF rivalries and ethnic considerations explained some of ZANU's unwillingness to make a transition or face a near-term election. According to Juta, the Nigerian Government was discouraged about the prospects for near-term resolution of the political crisis. Nonetheless, he said that President Obasanjo continued to maintain frequent contact with President Mbeki on Zimbabwe and remained interested in a positive solution.

2.(C) With respect to internal ZANU-PF politics, HC Juta thought there were increasing support for Party Chairman John Nkomo as a successor to Mugabe. Choosing an Ndebele as an interim leader would avoid contests among Shona contenders and yet would clearly have interim status since an Ndebele would not be accepted as a long-term leader of the party. Juta also commented that ZANU-PF continued to regard transition as an internal ZANU-PF matter and to regard the MDC merely as a side matter to be accommodated.

13. (C) Comment: Juta has regularly been more critical of President Mugabe and ZANU-PF to us than has been his Government in Abuja. He will soon conclude his mission here in Harare after five years.  
SULLIVAN